COUNCIL ON ALBERTA TEACHING STANDARDS

COATS ANNUAL REPORT

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COUNCIL ON ALBERTA TEACHING STANDARDS
MEMBERSHIP 1989 – 1990

CHAIRMAN: Gerry Heck - Conference of Alberta School Superintendents

MEMBERS: Marie Bobey - Public Representative
Peter Ditchburn - Private Schools
Bill Duke (September to December, 1989) - Alberta Education
David Jeary - Alberta Teachers' Association
Ken Mick - Teacher
Eric Mokosch Universities Coordinating Council
LaVerne Noble Teacher
Bill Rae - Teacher
Shirley Valentine - Alberta School Trustees' Association
Armin Wilcer - Teacher
Gary Zatko (January to July 1990) - Assistant Deputy Minister, Planning and Information Services, Alberta Education

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY: Larry Rappel - Alberta Education

SUPPORT ADMINISTRATION

Larry Rappel - Director, Teacher Certification & Development Branch
Gary Johnson - Assistant Director, Teacher Certification & Development Branch
Jerry McKenna - Attorney General
Audrey Dean - Director, Legislative Services
Joanne Riediger-Duebel - Excellence Awards Coordinator
Larry La Rouche - Research Officer
Eunice Barron - Recording Secretary

What are the functions of the Council on Alberta Teaching Standards (COATS)?

The function of COATS is twofold:

(1) To provide advice and recommendations to the Minister of Education in areas related to teaching standards including
Teacher Education including teacher preparation, induction and professional development
Teacher Certification and De-certification
Teacher Excellence
Teacher Evaluation
Practice Review

(2) To administer and to oversee the conduct of practice reviews of teachers, and to administer the Excellence in Teaching Awards program.

How has COATS addressed its functions in 1989 - 1990?

In the fall of 1989, the Minister of Education appointed several new members to the Council. A one-day orientation session was held for these new members and the initial meeting of the new Council was held shortly thereafter, on November 17, 1989.

Monthly meetings were held from November 1989 to June 1990 together with numerous sub-committee meetings. As well, COATS members and representatives of the partners-in-education organizations met in regard to particular activities such as the process for reviewing nominations for the Excellence in Teaching Awards, the planning for and the conduct of Forum '90, and the process for appeals of certification decisions heard by the Certification Appeal Committee.

What has COATS achieved in 1989 - 1990?

Teacher Education: In December 1989, Council struck a steering committee of representatives from the partnership organizations to begin developing plans for bringing together members of the education community to discuss teacher education. The steering committee established guidelines and a working committee to develop Forum '90. The concept for Forum '90 as a first step in examining teacher education, as well as the forum's objectives and format, were approved by the steering committee and COATS in March 1990.

Participants in Forum '90 were sent background reading materials to help them prepare for the discussions. One of these papers was the summary report of a survey undertaken by the Teacher Professional Development Sub-Committee of COATS.

Forum '90 was held in late May,1990. A report on Forum '90 was prepared by Dr. Walter Worth, the Forum Moderator. The report outlines six issues and fourteen recommendations developed by the Forum participants.

Council has prepared an action plan to address these recommendations, and has presented the plan to the Minister for his consideration.

Teacher Certification and Decertification: Council reviewed the current Certification of Teachers Regulation and recommended a number of changes. The most significant change was a process for dealing with initial applicants for certification by teachers who have incurred a criminal conviction and who are not subject to the Teaching Profession Act. Council also provided recommendations for changes to various forms related to applications for certification.

Council heard a request from the Dean of the Faculty of Education, University of Lethbridge, regarding that Faculty's proposed five-year teacher preparation program. Council recommended, to the Minister, that the Certification of Teachers Regulation be amended to include provisions for a Conditional Certificate that would allow University of Lethbridge students (who meet specified criteria) an opportunity to teach half time during the fifth year of the program.

The Certification Appeal Committee met on one occasion and rendered a decision on one appeal.

Teacher Excellence: Certificates recognizing teachers for excellence in teaching were distributed to Members of the Legislative Assembly for presentation to teachers at local ceremonies. In early November 1989, a ceremony was held in Calgary to honour the twenty recipients of Provincial Excellence in Teaching Awards.

Council reviewed the Excellence in Teaching Awards Program and made a number of significant changes to the Program in light of suggestions received from the partners-in-education organizations and other persons. These changes were implemented and promotional materials and nomination packages were distributed in March, 1990.

Nominations were received until mid-May, 1990. The partnership organizations were asked to appoint persons to the Nominations Review Committee. The Committee met July 9 - 12.

Of the 297 nominations received, the Nomination Review Committee determined that: 29 were incomplete, 6 were ineligible because the nominees did not hold permanent certification; 7 were unsuccessful for a variety of reasons; and 255 nominees would receive Local Awards. Of the 255 who would receive Local Awards, 20 also would receive a Provincial Award. The names of the proposed recipients were recommended to the Minister.

Work is ongoing to prepare and distribute the Local Certificates and to organize the ceremony at which the Provincial Certificates will be presented.

Teacher Evaluation: In 1988-89, Council undertook a joint venture with the Planning and Policy Secretariat of Alberta Education to study the impact of the provincial teacher evaluation policy that was, introduced in 1985. A private consulting firm was hired to conduct phase one of the study, the development of a research strategy. Due to budgetary considerations, phase two of the study - the implementation of the research strategy - has not yet been undertaken.

The Teacher Evaluation Sub-Committee of COATS decided to suspend its activities, temporarily, in light of the ongoing budgetary restrictions.

Practice Review: The Council completed its review of the Practice Review of Teachers Regulation. Changes to the Regulation in light of the new School Act were recommended to the Minister as were changes to the procedure for making the decisions of any hearings known to the media/public. The Regulation continues to provide the means for investigating complaints of alleged unskilled or incompetent teaching practice, and for providing the Minister with recommendations regarding the suspension or cancellation of teaching certification arising out of those investigations.

From September 1989 to July 1990, six telephone or written inquiries were received regarding the Regulation. As well, reviews of Board of Reference cases were ongoing.

Six preliminary inquiries were conducted and two of these proceeded to a formal investigation. Therefore, a Competency Review Panel and an alternative Panel were struck with the approval on the Minister.

One hearing by a Competency Review Panel is scheduled for the fall, 1990.